



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen Minutes
Thursday, March 16, 2023–6:00 p.m.
Rowe Town Hall – Hearing Room 1
and Via Remote Participation

Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol (via remote), Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie
Absent: Selectman Silva
Present: Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau, Administrative Assistant Brooke Shulda
Audience: Treasurer Green, Rosie Gordon (via remote)

Call to Order: Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

Announcement of recording devices- One

Noteworthy Announcements: Chair Sokol noted the sad new of Rowe’s oldest citizen Florence Bjork passing last week at 106 years.

Unforeseen Business (within preceding 48 hours):

Vice-Chair Semanie had a discussion with the Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director who said that the State of Emergency could be ended.

MOTION TO END STATE OF EMERGENCY: Chair Sokol made a motion to end the State of Emergency declared on March 14, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. EDT. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was accepted. (vote: 2-0-0)

Roll Call vote: Chair Sokol – yes Vice-Chair Semanie: -yes

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Ongoing Projects:

Policy Updates and Review:

Police Policies Review Submissions:

MOTION TO DELAY: Chair Sokol made a motion to delay approving the police policies until further review and editing. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was accepted. (vote: 2-0-0)

Roll Call vote: Chair Sokol – yes Vice-Chair Semanie: -yes

Road/Bridge Projects: Yankee Road Project/ Ford Hill Road Bridge/ Cyrus Stage Road Bridge:

There was no new information to report.

Tunnel Road Bridge Discussion:

There was discussion about the Tunnel Bridge situation and whether it was appropriate use of time and funding since it would cost an enormous amount of money to rebuild a bridge for 2 residents who have easements to use the bridge which is owned by the railroad company.

New Business:

Request from FRRS for decision regarding retiree COLA:

The Director of Franklin Regional Retirement System asked the Board to consider adding an additional 2% to the annual Cost-of-Living-Allowance (COLA) to retirees as the governor passed legislation that allows for an additional 2% as long as the retirement board and 2/3rds of the selectboards agree to do so. It was agreed to ask the Finance Committee to weigh in.

Rep. Natalie Blais to attend meeting Thursday March 23, 2023:

It was agreed to reschedule the Rep. Natalie Blais visit to Thursday, March 23rd at 6:00 p.m. Vice-Chair Semanie said she was going to the Rural Conference sponsored by the MA Select Board Association on April 1st. Executive Secretary asked to attend the conference as well.

MIIA Insurance Proposal – Gracy House:

Materials have not been acted upon since the fate of the Gracy House is on hold.

Nomination of Inspection of Animals:

The request for an Animal Inspector was reviewed and it was decided to wait until the appointments after Town Meeting.

MLP Manager – Salary Agreement Letter:

It was noted that the Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Manager had never had a Wage & Salary Letter for his compensation as MLP Manager. Chair Sokol prepared a letter and it was reviewed.

MOTION TO ACCEPT LETTER: Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the Wage & Salary Compensation Letter for the Municipal Light Plant Manager for the stipend of \$7400.00 per year. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was accepted. (vote: 2-0-0)
Roll Call vote: Chair Sokol – yes Vice-Chair Semanie: -yes

BOS/FinCom – Request BOA to attend proposed joint meeting on March 20, 2023:

Administrative Assistant confirmed that the meeting was posted.

Review of questions to present the School Administration/Committee – budget increase and low testing scores:

Questions were reviewed and updated. Chair Sokol agreed to send the questions on to the School Committee, Principal, Superintendent, Business Manager and the invitation was to meet with them on March 23rd at 6:45 p.m.

Old Business:

Free Cash – Accountant update:

Accountant Dave Fierro reported that Free Cash could not be finalized as yet since the Dept. of Revenue needs additional detail on the fund 3 accounts, or the projects funded through town meetings.

Warrants/Contracts:

Review Warrants FY23 W19 & FY23 PW19:

Vice-Chair Semanie to review.

DPW Parking Lot Paving – Chapter 90 Contract:

Treasurer Green worked on the State Aid Program Project Request for the DPW Parking Lot Paving. The purpose of the request for information is to assist the MassDOT Highway Division in approving the Chapter 90 Project Request Form. Members reviewed the request.

MOTION TO SIGN: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve Certification of the State Aid Program Project Request for the DPW Parking Lot Paving. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was accepted.

(vote: 2-0-0)

Roll Call vote: Chair Sokol – yes Vice-Chair Semanie: -yes

UFASI – Municipal Purpose Loan Contract – Terry Green:

Treasurer Green presented the Unibank Fiscal Advisory Services Inc. paperwork for the Municipal Loan combining the \$300,000.00 remaining on the Broadband note and 1,850,000 for road paving to take place this summer. Treasurer further explained that since Town Clerk was away on vacation and the note had to be certified by the Town Clerk, she would need to be appointed temporary Clerk in order to accomplish completing the paperwork by next day as required to secure the loan.

MOTION TO APPOINT TEMPORARY CLERK: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint Terry I. Green as temporary Town Clerk to complete the certification of the loan since Town Clerk is out of town. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was accepted. (vote: 2-0-0)

Roll Call vote: Chair Sokol – yes Vice-Chair Semanie: -yes

MOTION TO SIGN BOND: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the Bond Anticipation Note for borrowing \$2,150,000.00 for the combination of the broadband loan balance and the road paving work. With interest the amount of the loan is \$2,218,343.72.

Executive Secretary/Administrative Assistant Updates:

Payroll Training:

Executive Secretary said that following discussion at the last meeting she attended, it was the understanding that Ms. Shulda was to perform the payroll from start to finish without assistance the next payroll cycle and found that did not occur. There was discussion about helping the process for Brooke to be able to perform the task. It was decided that timesheets be put in a central location rather than in multiple locations. It was agreed to have the timesheets be put in a designated mailroom slot by Monday morning at 9 am. Chair Sokol stressed the idea of Treasurer and Executive Secretary scheduling time for training Administrative Assistant in a calendar. It was agreed that for the present Administrative Assistant would perform the duties of the payroll every other time. Treasurer stressed that she would have to check the work to ensure accuracy.

Future Meetings:

The next Board of Selectmen meeting would be on March 20th, 2023 at 6:00 pm with the Finance Committee.

Adjournment:

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 2-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

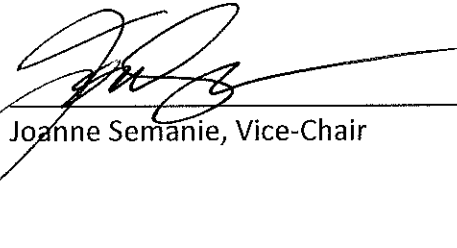
Approval Date: *MARCH 30, 2023*

Approved:



Chuck Sokol, Chair

Ed Silva, Selectman



Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Documents:

1. Agenda March 16, 2023
2. D. Kowacki email regarding COLA
3. PERAC Memorandum re: COLA Option
4. Rep. Blais email
5. MIIA Insurance Proposal – Gracy House
6. Free Cash – Accountant Update email
7. Executive Secretary Updates